

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Human Services Social Worker

Class Code: 51546

A. Purpose:

Assesses and provides direct social services to meet the needs of institutionalized patients by serving as the direct link between the patient, the institution, families and/or guardians, and community based private and public resources.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

Human Services Social Worker provides social services such as counseling, placement, family contacts, admissions, processing, assessment of needs, and input on treatments as a member of the treatment team.

Psychiatric Social Workers provide therapeutic psychotherapy counseling treatments and are responsible for administering the treatment established by the treatment team.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Develops and executes discharge plans to ensure the patient's well being and security within the community.
 - a. Obtains financial, vocational, legal, social, and recreational resources.
 - b. Makes written referrals for placement purposes within and outside the facility.
 - c. Provides community awareness training for patients/individuals.
 - d. Follows up on a selected group discharged patients or patients on leave by interviewing the ex-patient, family, agencies, and employers.
 - e. Contacts and/or visits potential placement facilities to determine whether sufficient resources are available at that location to accommodate the patient/individual.
2. Compiles and prepares accurate social histories, previous treatment information and patient assessments and shares findings with other members of the treatment team to determine effective treatment and therapies and to identify the patient's needs and goals.
 - a. Interviews the patient and relatives.
 - b. Contacts mental health centers and other agencies involved with the patient/individual.
 - c. Assesses the patient's/individual's needs and collaborates with a treatment team to develop an effective therapeutic treatment.
 - d. Communicates with the families of patients/individuals through visitations, over the telephone, or by mail.
3. Consults with patient's family and/or guardian to inform them of the patient's progress and to promote the patient's best interests to ensure that the family and/or guardian maintain a therapeutic role in the patient's treatment.
4. Establishes and maintains individual patient records to ensure accurate, up-to-date account of activities for reference purposes.
5. Conducts individual, group, and family counseling and resolves problems/conflicts that might interfere with the patients return to the community or home and interviews to receive input on the patient's status, progress, and needs.

6. Attends social service staff meetings to ensure that all staff are adequately trained and are kept abreast of any new developments.
7. Obtains and disseminates pre-admission data concerning the incoming patient to the treatment team and conducts pre-admission staffings to prepare the treatment team for the arrival of the patient.
8. Provides on going treatment, case management, and psychiatric rehabilitation services to people with severe and persistent mental illness in a community based setting to ensure individuals are successful and remain in the community.
 - a. Prepares, revises, and implements treatment plans.
 - b. Acts as a liaison between the client and other agencies.
 - c. Provides on going assessments and evaluations.
 - d. Delivers psychiatric medications and on going education to clients.
 - e. Provides protective payee services when necessary to clients.
 - f. Documents services provided to clients.
 - g. Provides education to the community when necessary.
9. Performs other work as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

Typically this position does not supervise, but may act as a lead worker over other Human Services Social Workers and direct care staff.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include finding appropriate placements for patients upon discharge because of the limited available resources and because of the wide range of problems and personalities.

Typical problems include getting accurate information from unreliable or unwilling patients and family members; family dissatisfaction with the patient care or families who resist discharge; dealing with patients' anger and hostility; convincing voluntary patients to complete treatments; and locating resources, particularly money, to fulfill a patient's need.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include prioritizing work load to complete assignments in a timely manner; content of discharge plans; need for family contact; how to obtain finances, clothing, and health care; relevant social history information; patient assessments; appropriate discharge facilities; and impact at treatment team meetings.

Decisions referred include need for medical testing; discharge patients/individuals; hiring, firing, and evaluation of employees; approval of leave requests; relevant training; involuntary commitment procedures; and the need of staff meetings.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with patients' families and/or guardians to determine patient needs and treatment team members to discuss treatments and progress; weekly contact with adjustment training centers, nursing homes, and transitional centers for placement purposes and social services, legal services, social security, and support services to obtain patient resources; and frequent contact with mental health centers to exchange information.

H. Working Conditions:

Typically works in an office environment, but also spends a significant amount of time on ward areas or in the client's home or work site where the incumbent is subject to physical or verbal assault from hostile, agitated patients.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge of:

- ethical standards, principles, and practices of social work, counseling, and human behavior;
- current social, economic, and health trends and services, and the ability to adapt trends to practical program applications and link clients with services needed;
- interviewing and other information gathering techniques;
- assessment principles and techniques;
- available community resources;
- record keeping;
- chemical dependency.

Ability to:

- remain calm with difficult patients and individuals;
- develop cooperative and satisfactory contacts with clients, patients, relatives, physicians, social agencies, community officials, and other administrative officials;
- write meaningful, concise, and accurate reports and correspondence;
- establish and maintain effective working relationships with diverse populations;
- communicate effectively with a wide variety of people;
- assess social service needs, complete social assessments and social histories, and identify and obtain programs or services sufficient to meet these needs;
- obtain reliable information.